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ABSTRACT

This report reviews a variety of approaches for working with homeless students. Information was gathered from state Coordinators of Education for Homeless Children and Youth, regional coordinators of homeless programs, and national and local organizations. The programs described are organized into five categories. The first concerns educating school personnel and contains one program: the Massachusetts Department of Education Inservice Workshop Project, which identifies the problems of homeless students for educators. The second category focuses on school-shelter cooperation and contains three programs: the Home School Visitors Program (Apache Junction, Arizona), the Oakland Salvation Army Shelter/Oakland Unified School District Program, and the West Virginia Department of Education Rural and Urban Projects. Grouped under category 3, "school-based programs," are the following 7 programs: the Coeur D'Alene School Project (Venice, California), the Transition Room project (Madison, Wisconsin), the Denver Public Schools After School Program, the Maryland Department of Education Homework Assistance Tutorial Program and Helping Hands Homework Assistance Program, the Massachusetts Department of Education Volunteer Tutor Project, the Extended School Day Program (New York, New York), and the Students Living in Temporary Housing Program (New York, New York). Progams for homeless adolescents, the focus of category 4, are the Adolescent Shelter Project (Massachusetts), Project GAIN (Greater Access to Independence) (New York, New York), and the Youth Education and Learning Project (Providence, Rhode Island). Finally, separate school programs, the subject of category 5, are the St. Vincent de Paul Joan Kroc Center/Harbor Summit School Program (San Diego, California), the First Place program (Seattle, Washington), and the Tone School (Tacoma, Washington). A seven-item bibliography, a list of survey responses, and a pamphlet for school personnel working with homeless children are appended. (FMW)

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EDUCATING HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH: A SAMPLE OF PROGRAMS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 1

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 2

SUMMARY 2

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS 5

I. EDUCATING SCHOOL PERSONNEL ABOUT THE PROBLEMS OF HOMELESS STUDENTS 5

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION INSERVICE WORKSHOP PROJECT: Various Locations, Massachusetts 5

II. HELPING HOMELESS STUDENTS THROUGH SCHOOL-SHELTER COOPERATION 7

HOME SCHOOL VISITORS: Apache Unified School District, Apache Junction, Arizona 7

OAKLAND SALVATION ARMY SHELTER/OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT PROGRAM: Oakland, California 8

WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RURAL AND URBAN PROJECTS: Monroe County and Morgantown, West Virginia 9

III. SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS 10

A. Programs Operating During School Hours 10

THE COEUR D'ALENE SCHOOL PROJECT: Venice, California 10

THE TRANSITION ROOM, Madison Metropolitan School District: Madison, Wisconsin 11

B. After School and Tutorial Programs 12

DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM: Denver, Colorado 12

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION HOMEWORK ASSISTANCE TUTORIAL PROGRAM AND HELPING HANDS HOMEWORK ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: Howard County, Anne Arundel County and Baltimore City, Maryland 13

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION VOLUNTEER TUTOR PROJECT: Holyoke, Lawrence, and Worcester, Massachusetts 14

EXTENDED SCHOOL DAY PROGRAM: New York, New York 15

STUDENTS LIVING IN TEMPORARY HOUSING PROGRAM: New York, New York 15

IV. PROGRAMS DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY FOR HOMELESS ADOLESCENTS 16

ADOLESCENT SHELTER PROJECT: Framingham, Springfield and Walpole, Massachusetts 16

PROJECT GAIN (GREATER ACCESS TO INDEPENDENCE): New York, New York 17

THE YOUTH EDUCATION AND LEARNING PROJECT: Providence, Rhode Island 18

V. SEPARATE SCHOOL PROGRAMS 19

ST. VINCENT de PAUL JOAN KROC CENTER/HARBOR SUMMIT SCHOOL PROGRAM: San Diego, California 19

FIRST PLACE: Seattle, Washington 20

TONE SCHOOL: Tacoma, Washington 21

CONCLUSION 23

BIBLIOGRAPHY 28

APPENDIX A: LIST OF RESPONSES 29

APPENDIX B: MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION "STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL" 33

READER RESPONSE FORM 37

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EDUCATING HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH: A SAMPLE OF PROGRAMS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

by Kathleen P. McCall
February, 1990

INTRODUCTION

There are approximately 300,000 to 3 million homeless individuals in the United States. (Center for Law and Education, 1987) Included in these disturbing statistics are homeless families with children, the fastest growing segment of this population. (Bowen, et. al 1989) With the homeless population predicted to increase 10% to 30% each year, more children face the possibility of growing up in shelters or on the streets. (Missouri Department of Education, 1989)

Other data highlighting the depth of this crisis include a February, 1989 report to Congress by the U.S. Department of Education (ED), which estimated that there are 220,000 school-aged homeless children nationwide. Approximately 65,000, or 30%, of these children are not regularly attending school, ED stated. (U.S. Department of Education, 1989) The figures from the National Coalition for the Homeless are even more startling. This group concludes that there are between 500,000 and 750,000 school aged children who are homeless, 57% of whom are not attending school on a regular basis. (Rafferty and Rollins, 1989)

The 1987 Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act has recently provided states with the incentive to identify the types of educational obstacles that homeless children encounter and the numbers of homeless children in each state. In response to this growing awareness, educators and advocates for the homeless are creating and implementing new programs designed to help meet the special needs of homeless children. Other programs may also be developed or expanded as a result of Congress' fiscal year 1990 appropriation of approximately $2.4 million dollars for grants to fund innovative programs for homeless students. State and local educational agencies will be eligible to apply for these grant monies, which will be awarded on a competitive basis and administered by ED. At this writing, ED had not released information about the application or award process for model program grants.

This report provides profiles of 17 programs created for homeless and other at-risk students. It is hoped that this research can serve as a resource for educators and

3b

policymakers who wish to learn more about homeless pupils and devise school-based strategies to assist these youngsters in gaining and maintaining access to the classroom, and in receiving a high quality education that responds positively to their needs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The primary objective of this research was to identify programs for homeless students working within the public schools. Letters soliciting information about effective programs were sent to 77 individuals, including all state Coordinators of Education of Homeless Children and Youth (the McKinney Act directed participating states to establish or designate a state office for this purpose), regional coordinators on homeless programs identified by the U.S. Department of Education, and contacts at national and local organizations who might have data regarding effective programs. The letters requested information about either existing or planned programs for homeless students, with an emphasis on activities in the regular school environment.

Written responses were received from 29 offices, three of whom (state Coordinators of Education of Homeless Children and Youth in Nebraska, Virginia, and Wyoming) answered that no such programs existed within their states. Based on the responses, follow up telephone and in-person interviews with educators (and analysis of written materials they provided) were carried out to identify the programs that appear in this report. (See list of organizations contacted and responses received in Appendix A, pages 29-32)

SUMMARY

This report reviews a variety of approaches for working with homeless students through after school initiatives, programs functioning within the school and projects that establish better contact between shelter providers and schools. Also included was a program aimed at helping to educate school personnel about the issues surrounding homeless students. In addition, due to the limited number of projects identified, a decision was made to include in this report programs that function in separate environments as well as those in the public schools. It is hoped that the descriptions of these alternative programs might inspire public school officials to incorporate some of the best features of separate projects into public programs for and policies governing the education of the homeless.

The projects outlined here have much to recommend them. They provide remedial education services for children whose homelessness impedes regular school attendance, appropriate time and conditions for study, and continuity of instruction; they recognize

and attempt to remedy many school officials' lack of knowledge and understanding of the problems homeless students face; they utilize additional personnel to provide academic and emotional support for these children; they focus on involving homeless parents in their children's educational progress; they seek to coordinate educational services with social services programs and community efforts to assist homeless and indigent families; they implement flexible enrollment policies and they endeavor to give homeless students instruction that is more individualized and provided by sensitive, caring educators. On the other hand, the majority of these programs have only recently started, and thus have no track record. Many programs are also hampered by uncertain funding and by the obstacles inherent in serving a transient population. In addition, while all the separate school programs outlined in this report utilize many good educational practices and procedures, and exemplify the kindness, sensitivity and dedication to homeless students that public schools would do well to emulate, the need and/or willingness of educators and policymakers to create and maintain separate programs for homeless students raises significant public policy questions. For these reasons, it seems unwise to characterize the programs described here as unimpeachable "models" for educating the homeless. They represent instead some nascent, potentially effective approaches to addressing the myriad of educational problems faced by homeless students.

I. EDUCATING SCHOOL PERSONNEL ABOUT THE PROBLEMS OF HOMELESS STUDENTS

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION INSERVICE WORKSHOP PROJECT: Various Locations, Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Department of Education is sponsoring a series of inservice workshops during the 1989-90 school year to give educators an opportunity to learn about and understand the special needs of homeless students and their families. These workshops also serve as an opportunity to bring together school staff and shelter providers. At this writing, the Department has already presented two workshops, in October, 1989 and January, 1990, and contracted with community agencies to carry out additional sessions. Attendance at these workshops is voluntary for educators, shelter staff, and social service agency personnel.

At the October, 1989 workshop, participants were exposed to the typical routine a family must endure in order to be admitted into a shelter. The inservice also emphasized the daily stresses encountered by a homeless family seeking shelter.

The main objectives of the October workshop were to:

* help non-homeless parents, teachers, and children understand what they may have in common with homeless families;

* help teachers assist homeless students in developing friendships with their non-homeless peers;

* communicate the facts and identify the fallacies and myths about homeless children;

* enable participants to understand the problems homeless children experience, and why they may have problems in school; and

* suggest intervention strategies and other ways that school personnel can be involved in supporting homeless families.

Children's advocates from Massachusetts shelters, homeless outreach groups and staff from the Massachusetts Department of Education's Division of School Programs and other state agencies (including the Department of Social Services, the Office for Children, and the Department of Public Welfare) helped facilitate workshop discussions by sharing their experiences of working with homeless families. In addition, school personnel involved with homeless students provided first hand information about these children's educational needs.

Following a presentation of issues affecting homeless students and a role play demonstrating the steps a family must follow to gain access to a shelter, participants engaged in small group discussions which considered topics such as:

* What is it like to be homeless?;

* What is it like to teach homeless children?;

* How can shelters, social service agencies and schools better communicate with each other?; and

* Success stories.

In addition, each participant was given a packet containing: a "flow chart" depicting homeless family's journey through system to permanent housing; a list of service agencies and their roles; names, addresses and phone numbers of staff of county Department of Social Services offices; a list of shelter addresses and numbers in the area; a list of the staff addresses and numbers for the state Office for Children; a list of the names and numbers of staff in the state Department of Public Welfare (DPW) and a copy of materials describing the DPW's Emergency Assistance program.

Workshop participants also received copies of a pamphlet for homeless parents, *Keeping Your Children in School.* This pamphlet contains information about the child's right to a public education, homeless parents' right to choose whether their children will transfer into a new school district or remain in the district in which the family lived before becoming homeless, guidelines for parents to consider when making enrollment decisions, information about school and health records, and a list of names and numbers of persons who can help parents with this process. A pamphlet for educators, *Strategies for School Personnel*, was also distributed. This pamphlet contains many ideas about the ways educators can help meet the special needs of homeless students, including establishing and volunteering in shelter reading programs, donating books to homeless children, and encouraging others in the school to contribute to clothing and school supply drives.

These workshops are being funded through the state's McKinney education grant of approximately $90,000 per year.

<u>For more information, contact:</u>

Ms. Michelle Fryt Linehan
Coordinator, Education of Homeless Children and Youth
Massachusetts Department of Education
1385 Hancock Street
Quincy, Massachusetts 02169
(617) 770-7493

II. HELPING HOMELESS STUDENTS THROUGH SCHOOL-SHELTER COOPERATION

HOME SCHOOL VISITORS: Apache Unified School District, Apache Junction, Arizona

Many of the homeless families in the Apache Junction Unified School District live in remote areas in the desert and other rural locations. In order to meet the needs of homeless children and ensure their enrollment in the public schools, district personnel developed the Home School Visitors Project in 1974. Since its inception, this program, in conjunction with a community-based effort called Project Help, has served between 400 and 500 families each year.

In the Home School Visitors Project, school personnel act as liaisons between the school and the family. Personnel go out to shelters and other locations in which homeless families live, and assist parents in contacting the school and social service agencies who can help meet the family's needs. For example, the staff assists parents with registration tasks so that their children can enroll in school and, if necessary, helps parents complete applications for federal school meals programs.

The school district also provides transportation from shelter locations to the schools. Showers have been built in the schools to allow the students to bathe and new clothing is given to the students if necessary. In addition, the project provides students with an after school program of remedial assistance.

Home School Visitors also utilizes Project Help, a community-based venture which has provided supportive services since the 1970s. Project Help began when school bus drivers began noticing that some children did not have the necessary clothing for school and when it became apparent that the rural location of many needy families prevented them from gaining access to social service agencies. Project Help serves homeless individuals and families as well as other low income persons. Food, clothing, medical and dental care, automotive repairs, and other services are provided to families in need. Many of the materials and services are donated by community members.

Substantial donations of money, needed materials and volunteer time allow both the Home School Visitors Program and Project Help to operate with minimal help from tax dollars. The Apache Junction Unified School District funds only the salaries of two staff members and a part-time secretary. All other expenses are covered by contributions from the community, which add up to approximately $400,000 in cash, services, and donated items each year.

For more information, contact:

Mr. Bill Scheel
Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youth
Federal Programs Division

State Department of Education
1535 West Jefferson
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
(602) 542-5235

or

Dr. William Wright, Superintendent
Apache Junction Unified School District
P.O. Box 879
Apache Junction, Arizona 85220

OAKLAND SALVATION ARMY SHELTER/OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT PROGRAM: Oakland, California

The Oakland Salvation Army Family Shelter requires that children living in the shelter attend school. Shelter staff also provide parents with information regarding the choice between transferring the child to a school near the shelter or remaining in the school the child previously attended. Since most shelter residents are from the Oakland area, many students express a desire to continue in the school they attended before entering the shelter. Shelter staff also encourage and try to assist homeless parents in ensuring continuity of instruction for their children.

To that end, the shelter and the Oakland Unified School District agreed that children at the Salvation Army Shelter can attend the school of their choice within the district. The agreement also includes a special registration process to facilitate homeless students' immediate enrollment into the public school system. Under the terms of this agreement, homeless families living at the shelter or doubling up with friends or relatives may enroll students without satisfying transfer requirements that are usually mandatory for students living outside of a school's attendance zone. Parents are initially referred to the district's Student Services office. This office assesses the family's case and if necessary, provides parents with an "intra-district transfer," permitting the homeless child to attend their prior school. Parents are then allowed up to 30 days to obtain information demonstrating identification. A variety of documents, including a welfare card or documentation of a family's residence at the Salvation Army Shelter, are accepted as verification. If a child's immunization records cannot be obtained, students are immediately referred to the county health department for the required inoculations.

In addition to the special enrollment policy, the school district provides homeless students with transportation passes to attend school. Costs for these passes are absorbed by the School District.

The shelter helps out by providing an afternoon program for children ages three and up, including supervised homework time and recreational activities. Approximately

27 children reside in the shelter at any one time, including approximately 17 youngsters of school age.

For more information, contact:

Ms. Pearl Pritchard
The Salvation Army Family Shelter
810 Clay Street
Oakland, California 94607
(415) 451-5547

WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RURAL AND URBAN PROJECTS: Monroe County and Morgantown, West Virginia

The West Virginia Department of Education received permission from the U.S Department of Education to use funds from its $50,000 McKinney education grant to finance two programs for homeless students. One program is in a rural setting, the other in an urban one. These projects, which cost $5,000 each, began in January, 1990 and will continue through the end of the 1989-90 academic year.

The first project funds services provided by a non-profit rural community action agency in Monroe County, West Virginia. It is intended to help elementary school-aged children by offering tutoring and counseling services. In addition, the project coordinator and an advocate work with mental health personnel to conduct self esteem assessments of homeless students. This information helps the staff learn about and work closely with each student. The staff also has an outreach component to work with the parents of the children, and to assist homeless families in taking an active part in fostering the education of their children.

A unique feature of this project is its personal hygiene aspect. Many of the children do not have access to showers on a regular basis. In order to respond to this need, the children are allowed to enter school early and use the school's showers to bathe before classes begin. In addition, students receive a change of clothes each week from donations to the project.

The rural community project works in an elementary school serving the needs of six to eight children and is anticipating helping more students once the program is more fully established.

The West Virginia Department of Education is also funding a second project, a domestic violence shelter program in a university setting in urban Morgantown, the home of the University of West Virginia. This program of supplementary services includes special counseling to address the specific needs of children involved in domestic violence. In addition, tutorial services and educational materials, including a

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computer, are available. The students involved in this program range in age, including some high school students, but most of the participants are in elementary and junior high school. At this writing approximately eight children have participated and many more students are anticipated to need this service. This project also has an outreach component to afford students the opportunity to continue counseling once they have left the shelter.

Both the rural and urban projects will need continued funding after the 1989-90 school year. The Department of Education plans to solicit community support to maintain these projects once their effectiveness is demonstrated.

For more information, contact:

Mr. Robert Boggs, Coordinator
Education of Homeless Children and Youth
West Virginia Department of Education
Capitol Complex
Charleston, WV 25305
(304) 348-8830

III. SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS

A. Programs Operating During School Hours

THE COEUR D'ALENE SCHOOL PROJECT: Venice, California

In the Coeur d'Alene School in Venice, California, homeless children account for 20% to 30% of the school's population, one of the highest enrollments of homeless students in any school in the nation. On average, the school serves 35 to 50 homeless students a day. To address the academic needs of these children, the school secured a $70,000 grant from the Greater Los Angeles Partnership for the Homeless, a private charity, to hire additional school personnel. This project began in September, 1989, and is funded through the end of the 1989-90 school year.

The school has hired a teacher, a social worker, a part-time psychologist, a part-time nurse and a self esteem specialist to help the school's staff more effectively meet the needs of homeless students. Some of the money has also been used to provide extra clerical support to maintain accurate records of the students.

When a homeless family takes steps to enroll a child in the Coeur d'Alene School, the family is immediately referred to the school psychologist. The school's social worker assists the family in obtaining the necessary records for enrollment. If the family needs counseling, the social worker provides support and if necessary, gets the family in touch with the appropriate service provider.

The Coeur d'Alene School program also includes an additional teacher assistant for homeless students. This person gives the homeless student individualized attention to help the youngster adjust to the school setting. It is also this teacher's responsibility to provide any needed remedial assistance to the child.

The entire staff at the Coeur d'Alene School work together to give homeless children a variety of educational and supportive services and to provide additional resources and other assistance for school personnel. Staff hope that these efforts result in a positive learning environment for homeless children.

For more information, contact:

Ms. Beth Ojena, Principal
Coeur d'Alene Elementary School
810 Coeur d'Alene Avenue
Venice, California
(213) 821-7813

THE TRANSITION ROOM, Madison Metropolitan School District: Madison, Wisconsin

The Madison Metropolitan School District created a "transition room" at the Emerson Elementary School in February, 1989 to help homeless students enter the public school system. The transition room serves all homeless children in the district from kindergarten through fifth grade. During the 1989-90 academic year, this program has assisted more than 80 students.

The main objective of this project is to evaluate the student's academic level and ease the adjustment into the regular classroom. The project also aims to help regular classroom teachers better prepare to address the special needs of homeless students.

Students attend the transition room for a period of two weeks to a month. During this time, the school district provides transportation for the students from the shelter to the school. Transportation continues, if necessary, after placement in the regular classroom. Upon completion of the assessment, the child is placed into an appropriate educational setting in the Emerson School. A staff person from the transition room introduces the student to his or her new teacher and informs the teacher of the child's needs. The program works closely with shelter providers, educators and parents. For example, an instructor from a local post secondary vocational school works with parents in improving their job skills. Parenting lessons are also available.

Every new homeless elementary student entering the Madison Metropolitan School District is referred to the transition room. This practice created an overcrowding problem in September, 1989, when 40 children attended the program during the first few days of school. At this writing, however, the rate at which new homeless children enter the district has declined. In order to provide continual services after homeless

families are placed in permanent housing, the district is hoping to expand the services of the transition program to other schools in the area.

The transition room is staffed by a psychologist, teacher and an aide. The budget is $84,300 for the 1988-89 academic year. It is funded entirely by the school district. For more information, contact:

Mr. Cal Stone
Coordinator of Programs for Students At Risk
Madison Metropolitan School District
545 West Dayton Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53703-1967
(608) 266-6006

B. After School and Tutorial Programs

DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM: Denver, Colorado

The Denver Public School System is implementing an after school program, which began January 1, 1990, to meet the needs of homeless students in two district elementary schools. The Denver program provides homeless students with tutoring, recreational activities, a snack and transportation services. This program is expected to serve approximately 200 students.

Program staff, two teachers hired by the district, take on the added responsibility of acting as advocates for homeless students in the school and social services systems. The school district intends to use the after school program to develop strong relationships between the school and other social service agencies and to utilize these relationships to meet the individual needs of homeless children and their families. It is expected that social workers will cooperate with the program by helping to ensure that program participants are provided with any necessary counseling.

One of the strengths of the program is that it is open to all the students at each school. Thus, the program avoids stigmatizing the homeless child and facilitates positive interaction between homeless and non-homeless students.

In addition to providing instruction for homeless children, the after school program will benefit the parents of homeless students, whose housing or job search might prevent them from meeting their children after school. The program also accommodates families who reside at shelters with regulations that do not permit entrance into the facility until late afternoon.

The program is budgeted for $116,000. It will be funded primarily through a private organization, the Captiva Corporation, which developed this program in

cooperation with the Denver Public Schools. The school district will provide any needed additional funds.

For more information, contact:

David Pimentel, Ed.D.
Senior Consultant
Colorado Department of Education
210 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, Colorado 80203
(303) 866-6756

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION HOMEWORK ASSISTANCE TUTORIAL PROGRAM AND HELPING HANDS HOMEWORK ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: Howard County, Anne Arundel County and Baltimore City, Maryland

The Maryland Department of Education has organized two after school projects -- the Homework Assistance/Tutorial Program and the Helping Hands Homework Assistance Program -- to help homeless students. These programs began in 1989 as part of an effort to offer remedial assistance to students residing at shelters.

The Homework Assistance/Tutorial Program sends teams of teachers to visit local shelters and provide supervised homework time and remedial help. The shelters in the program include one in Howard County, one in Anne Arundel County, and five in Baltimore City. Each team, consisting of three to five teachers, is assigned a shelter. The program currently runs two days a week for one and a half hours per session.

All teachers participating in this program are volunteers. Thus, the program has no cost factor. The state Department of Education is working on a proposal to implement the program in all of Maryland's shelters, however. A budget is now being created to pay for teachers and materials and will be submitted for approval so that the program can be replicated in the 1990-91 school year. In addition, the Department of Education plans to assume the responsibility of organizing training and support sessions for the participating teachers.

A second project sponsored by the state Department of Education is the Helping Hands Homework Assistance Program. This program works with two shelters in Baltimore City to educate students living in those shelters. A district teacher and team of three honors high school students take a group of students from each shelter and walk with them to the local public library, where the teacher and students provide homeless youngsters with tutorial and remedial assistance. The program serves a total of approximately 30 students.

The budget for the Helping Hands Homework Assistance Program is $8,000 -- $4,000 for each site -- and is funded by the state Department of Education. The

funds were used for staff and materials, and for the purchase of additional books to establish a reference center in each shelter.

For more information, contact:

Ms. Peggy Jackson-Jobe
Coordinator, Education of Homeless Children and Youth
Maryland Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street, 4th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
(301) 333-2445

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION VOLUNTEER TUTOR PROJECT: Holyoke, Lawrence, and Worcester, Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Department of Education's Volunteer Tutor Project is providing funds to three school districts to provide one-on-one and small group tutorial assistance to homeless students. The time and location of these sessions will vary from program to program. At a minimum, however, tutoring will take place twice a week, for one hour at each meeting. The program is scheduled to run from February, 1990 until the end of the 1989-90 school year. It is expected that at least ten homeless students will receive services in each of the three participating school districts.

Referrals to the program will be made by school personnel or the child's parents. Once a referral is made, the project contact person will get in touch with the child's parents and seek permission for the student's participation in the project. Next, the project person will match the child with a volunteer tutor and arrange a meeting time and place. Some identified meeting places include the local school, a shelter site or a town library.

Massachusetts school districts were asked to submit proposals to the state Department of Education to participate in this program. Three districts -- in Holyoke, Lawrence, and Worcester -- were awarded grants of $3,500 each to implement the project in their jurisdictions. Site coordinators solicit and schedule training for the volunteers in each location. The Massachusetts Department of Education has assumed responsibility for training the volunteers, and has conducted training at all three sites. This training was developed by a consultant from the Department. Monitoring of the program is also being carried out by the Department of Education.

For more information, contact:

Ms. Michelle Fryt Linehan
Coordinator, Education of Homeless Children and Youth
Massachusetts Department of Education
1385 Hancock Street
Quincy, Massachusetts 02169
(617) 770-7493

EXTENDED SCHOOL DAY PROGRAM: New York, New York

The Extended School Day Program, run by the New York City Board of Education, began in 1985. It provides tutorial, recreational and counseling services to elementary school children at three New York City schools. In addition, enrichment activities such as computers, music, arts and crafts are provided. Students also receive transportation from the schools to the shelters in which they reside. The program runs four days a week from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 150 days a year, and is staffed by teachers from the participating schools.

Three hundred fifty students are participating in the Extended School Day Program in the 1989-90 academic year. Although this program was designed specifically for homeless students, it is also open to all other children at the school. This feature avoids stigmatizing and isolating homeless students and allows these children an opportunity to establish better relationships with their non-homeless peers.

This program costs approximately $100,000 a year to operate and is funded through the state Board of Education's Attendance Improvement Drop Out Prevention Program.

For more information, contact:

Dr. Alan Lazarus
80 Montgomery Street
New York, New York 10002
(212) 577-0205

STUDENTS LIVING IN TEMPORARY HOUSING PROGRAM: New York, New York

The Students Living in Temporary Housing Program, started in 1987, provides instructional services for students at 61 shelters throughout New York City. The program is run by the New York City Board of Education and funded through the New York Attendance Improvement Drop Out Prevention Program (AIDP). The annual cost of this project is $6 million.

Each participating site has a Family Assistant or Assistants (the number of assistants depends on the size of the shelter), who represent(s) the Board of Education at the shelter. Family assistants visit the shelters daily. These representatives are responsible for interviewing homeless families and ensuring that each family understands its options regarding educational placement. (New York City homeless parents have the right to choose whether their children will continue to attend the school they attended before becoming homeless, or in a school serving the area in which the shelter is located.) Representatives also carry out an attendance outreach program and help the children get onto the proper buses for school.

The Board of Education provides funding to its family assistant representatives, and gives these persons the authority to make educational program decisions suited to the

needs of the children in each shelter. For example, some shelters are located far away from school, thus making an after school program at the school site impractical for these students. These shelters conduct after school programs at the shelter sites. Depending on the needs of the shelter and the space available, programs can take place three to four days a week. Teachers are recruited from the public schools to help students with homework and provide any necessary remedial assistance.

Participating shelters offer a variety of educational programs, including parental involvement and cultural enrichment. For example, homeless children at 11 shelters can take advantage of a project that visits local museums and allows these children an opportunity to work with a diverse group of artists. Shelters may also choose to hire social workers or guidance counselors to assist their programs, thereby making counseling services available for homeless parents and children.

For more information, contact:

Ms. Bonnie Gross
362 Schermerhorn Street, Room 318
Brooklyn, New York 11217
(718) 935-4050

IV. PROGRAMS DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY FOR HOMELESS ADOLESCENTS

ADOLESCENT SHELTER PROJECT: Framingham, Springfield and Walpole, Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Department of Education developed the Adolescent Shelter Project to respond to the educational needs of homeless adolescents. The goal of this program, which began in January, 1990, is to provide short-term educational services to students residing in runaway shelters, while these students are temporarily unable to attend the regular public school. This program also assists homeless adolescents who wish to attend the public school and receive tutoring from this program in the evening. The Adolescent Shelter Project is expected to serve approximately 12 adolescents each month.

The Department of Education solicited applications for this program from shelter providers. Providers developed educational programs based on the philosophy of the shelter and the needs of the residents. After reviewing these proposals, the Department awarded three grants of $7,500 each to participating shelters in the communities of Framingham, Springfield and Walpole.

Each adolescent shelter site has hired certified teachers to carry out the instructional component of the program. In addition, the Department of Education has hired a part time consultant, who will be responsible for conducting site visits in order to help staff

effectively carry out the program. The consultant will also work with these educators to develop an evaluation tool to measure the program's success. The Adolescent Shelter Project will also be subject to on-going evaluation, including the collection and review of information during consultant site visits, and analysis of program data from staff at each site.

For more information, contact:

Ms. Michelle Fryt Linehan
Coordinator, Education of Homeless Children and Youth
Massachusetts Department of Education
1385 Hancock Street
Quincy, Massachusetts 02169
(617) 770-7493

PROJECT GAIN (GREATER ACCESS TO INDEPENDENCE): New York, New York

Project GAIN, a collaborative effort of New York University (NYU) and the non-profit community agency Federation Employment and Guidance Services (FEGS), was first funded in 1986 through a grant from the United States Department of Education and the New York City Board of Education. The funds allowed NYU and FEGS to design and implement a vocational and educational program to address the special needs of homeless adolescents who had dropped out of school. Since its inception, Project GAIN has helped more than 75 adolescents receive their high school diplomas. It is managed and funded by the New York City Board of Education at a cost of $150,000 per year.

The main priority of this program is to bring adolescents back into school so that they can complete their education. Project staff regularly visit New York City welfare hotels, shelters, and group homes to recruit students into the program. Currently, Project GAIN is offering both academic and various supportive services to help individuals succeed in school and after graduation. Individual and group counseling, cultural enrichment, vocational and career counseling, and health care are among the services provided. In addition, project staff refer adolescents to appropriate social service agencies to assist these students in finding appropriate housing.

Students must be enrolled in school in order to participate in Project GAIN. An individual will remain with the project until he or she has earned a high school diploma. On the average, students participate in Project GAIN for two to two-and-a-half years.

The Bronx-Regional High School, where Project GAIN is housed, is an alternative school for students whose previous discipline problems, high absenteeism, or academic difficulties made them unqualified to attend other city high schools. Project GAIN staff members, who are employed by FEGS, work with high school personnel to

provide additional support services. Programs such as day care, teen pregnancy prevention and drug counseling are part of the school's curriculum and open to Project GAIN students.

Overcoming the tremendous obstacles these students face and convincing them to remain in the program is not an easy task, as evidenced by Project GAIN's 26% drop-out rate. Despite the many problems faced and posed by homeless adolescents, however, Project GAIN attempts to play an important role in the lives of these teenagers by offering them a positive alternative to life on the streets.

For more information, contact:

Mr. Richard Brown, Coordinator
Drop-Out Prevention Services
The Federation Employment and Guidance Service
62 West 14th Street
New York, New York 10011
(212) 206-8940 or (718) 963-3484

THE YOUTH EDUCATION AND LEARNING PROJECT: Providence, Rhode Island

The Providence, Rhode Island affiliate of the Travelers Aid Society initiated the Youth Education and Learning Project (YELP) after its Runaway Youth Project identified a need for educational services for transient adolescents. The Society found that in order to function effectively in society, many runaways needed to strengthen academic skills in reading, writing and mathematics, in addition to learning to obtain the basic necessities of food, shelter, and clothing.

YELP, which opened in March 1989, addresses these needs by offering two classes a week for youth aged 17-24. Twenty-five students have participated in the program since its inception. At this writing, 12 adolescents are enrolled in YELP classes.

The program's primary objective is to enable participants to utilize past strengths and experiences in improving their academic skills. YELP supports and encourages adolescents in establishing long and short term personal goals, and offers educational services to help students meet these goals.

YELP teachers conduct an initial interview to assess the adolescent's background and needs. In addition, the program gives youth an informal assessment to evaluate their academic levels. Once this preliminary process is completed, the student and teacher work together to draft a learning contract. This contract establishes educational goals for the student, and includes an agreement governing the student's attendance in the program.

Participating adolescents receive individualized instruction. YELP maintains a class size of no larger than fifteen students and utilizes a teacher, a full-time aide, and volunteers in order to provide students with one-on-one attention.

One of the strengths of this project is its extensive writing component. Students publish a monthly newsletter called *Street Voices*, which contains samples of class members' writing, poetry and art work. This publication gives students a vehicle for self-expression and a positive way to confront their feelings. It also provides reinforcement that their point of view is listened to and respected. The staff feels strongly that *Street Voices* is an extremely important aspect of the project.

The Travelers Aid Society provides YELP with a support system that enhances the educational program. YELP students are recruited through the Society's Runaway Youth Project. Social workers from the Runaway Youth Project work to gain the trust of homeless adolescents and provide peer group counseling, two components essential to a successful program for this population. Additional services such as employment counseling, medical attention, clothing, food, and housing assistance are provided by the Travelers Aid Society network. The availability of these multi-services enables YELP participants to focus more effectively on learning.

In 1989, YELP obtained a grant from "Work Force 2000," a state initiative designed to bring together government and private industry to support youth training and employment opportunities. These funds will add an employment component to the program. As of January, 1990, YELP students also began to receive career counseling.

The budget for the YELP program is $70,000 a year. The Travelers Aid Society funds all the project's administrative overhead, telephone and office supply expenses, and is thus primarily responsible for the low operating cost of YELP.

For more information, contact:

Ms. Sally Gabb
177 Union Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903
(401) 521-2255

V. SEPARATE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

ST. VINCENT de PAUL JOAN KROC CENTER/HARBOR SUMMIT SCHOOL PROGRAM: San Diego, California

The school Superintendent of San Diego Unified County worked with the St. Vincent de Paul/Joan Kroc Center, a local multi-program shelter, to develop the Harbor Summit School, a school specifically designed to meet the needs of homeless students. The Harbor School, which opened in July, 1987, provides an academic program for students living in the St. Vincent de Paul shelter.

The school serves students from kindergarten through eighth grade. Attendance varies depending on the shelter population, but averages 30 to 45 students daily. Harbor School staff, who are hired by the San Diego County Office of Education,

consists of three teachers and three teacher's aides. These educators work to provide homeless students with individualized attention.

The school is open year-round and operates five days a week from 7:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. The academic curriculum is supplemented by speech therapy, tutorial and recreational programs. The school also develops and maintains academic records, so that homeless children enrolled at the Harbor School will have these documents when they transfer to the public school system.

The Harbor School costs approximately $190,000 a year to operate. Funds for the school are provided by the California Department of Public Social Services. The San Diego County Superintendent of Schools contributes educational materials, certified teaching staff and additional resources to finance computers, field trips, and other activities. In addition, the school district provides the resources necessary for special education assessments. Services offered by the Center include medical care, so that immunization records can be compiled and made available when families leave the shelter.

One obstacle encountered by Harbor School staff is the difficulty of conducting follow up tasks after a homeless child has left the shelter. In many cases, homeless families move from the St. Vincent de Paul Center without leaving a way for shelter or school staff to track their location and progress.

For more information, contact:

Ms. Mary Case, Director
St. Vincent de Paul Joan Kroc Center
1501 Imperial Avenue
San Diego, California 92101
(619) 233-8500

FIRST PLACE: Seattle, Washington

First Place is a transitional school program serving kindergarten to sixth-grade children from Seattle area homeless shelters. First Place is a non-profit organization, and is funded through donations and through a contract with the Interagency Program of the Seattle public schools. This program, offered as an alternative to the public school setting, opened in April, 1989.

Homeless Seattle parents are informed that they may choose whether to enroll their child in First Place or in the public schools. Although outreach for this program was initially conducted through visits to shelters by First Place staff, the program is now well known to service providers. Thus, if parents want to consider sending their children to First Place, shelters have sufficient information about the program and can assist parents in the enrollment process.

The school at First Place operates five days a week and is open during the regular academic year. Approximately 30 students attend daily. On the average, students participate in the program for four to six weeks. Part of the program involves conducting educational assessments of the students, so that the instruction they receive can be tailored to their individual needs. This assessment and programming process also provides students with an academic record which can be used when they transfer to a public school. Counseling, medical and dental services, clothing, breakfast and lunch are also offered. In addition, First Place staff works with homeless parents to help them become active participants in their children's education.

The budget for First Place is approximately $250,000 a year. First Place receives bus transportation from the Seattle school district. The Board of Directors and Executive Committee are currently engaged in fund raising activities, with one of the goals being the establishment of an endowment for the school.

For more information, contact:

Ms. Carolyn Pringle
Executive Director, First Place Program
P.O. Box 15112
Seattle, Washington 98115-0112
(206) 323-6715

TONE SCHOOL: Tacoma, Washington

The Tone School, which began in May, 1988, is the coordinated effort of the Tacoma School District, the Tacoma YWCA, city social and health services, shelter providers and other non-profit organizations. These entities collaborated to establish a special school for homeless students who reside in four Tacoma area shelters.

The Tone School serves children from kindergarten through eighth grade and runs five days a week. Student enrollment varies, depending on the duration of the child's stay in a shelter, but on the average, continues for two to three weeks. Approximately 30 to 35 students are enrolled each week. The Tone School provides its students with academics, counseling and medical services, meals and clothing. Students are also transported door-to-door from the school to the shelters in which they live.

The staff for the Tone School consists of two teachers, a teacher's aide, a part-time nurse, a social worker, and a part-time counselor. The school social worker acts as a liaison between homeless parents and the community. This individual is responsible for working with parents while their children attend school, and assisting these adults in their search for employment and housing.

The Tone School operates in a building donated by the Tacoma YWCA. The "Y" also supplies utilities, office support and space for administrative tasks free of charge,

and applies to corporations for grant monies used to hire the school's social worker, counselor and nurse.

Many of the materials for the school have either been donated by corporations or obtained through grant monies. Private donations have also enabled the school to accumulate a small trust fund to provide for emergency expenses and assistance to needy families.

The Tone School is part of the Tacoma Public School system. It therefore benefits from district funding for the school's teachers and teacher's aide, and from access to district academic curriculum and services such as bus transportation, meals programs and special education services. The district's direct contribution for the salaries of teachers and the teacher's aide is $190,000 a year. Additional costs, for other staff members and school expenses, are funded through other grants obtained with the help of the YWCA, which total $128,000 annually.

For more information, contact:

Dr. Wanda Buckner
CAB 307
P.O. Box 1357
Tacoma, Washington 98401
(206) 596-2551

CONCLUSION

This research attempted to identify programs working within the public school setting that focus on meeting the needs of homeless children. It was hoped that the recognition of effective programs might inspire more educators to adopt successful and innovative techniques to assist homeless students in their school systems.

Researching this project was often frustrating. Unfortunately, there are not many programs in the regular public school setting that attempt to support homeless children. The prospects for homeless adolescents are even worse. In order to receive assistance for two of the three adolescent programs identified in this report -- New York's Project GAIN and Rhode Island's Youth Education and Learning Project -- a homeless adolescent would have to have already dropped out of school. There were no programs found that worked directly with homeless students in the regular junior high school or high school setting to prevent these youth from leaving school.

Many of the programs outlined above face an uncertain future due to a lack of guaranteed funding. The Homework Assistance/Tutorial Program in Maryland and the West Virginia Department of Education's rural and urban projects are both in the process of searching for financing in order to continue their activities in the 1990-91 school year. Additionally, the limited financial support provided by school districts and the minimal monetary incentives offered by local and state governments leave a significant number of these programs dependent on donations and grants for their survival. The Tone School in Tacoma, Washington is a prime example of this. Without the cooperative efforts of the Tacoma School District, which funds the budget for the school's teaching staff, and the Tacoma YWCA, which donates the space for the program and helps secure grants for other expenses, the Tone School would be unable to provide the services it now offers.

Another problem experienced by a majority of the programs is a function of homelessness itself -- the transient nature of these children and their families. Due to shelter limits on how long a family may stay or other circumstances, many homeless children move frequently during an academic year. This creates frustration for those working to ensure continuity of instruction and services for homeless children and families. The students' constant moving from place to place also makes it difficult for many programs to track these children to ensure that services continue after the child has left. The Transition Room in Madison, Wisconsin, for example, does not have the staff to keep track of a homeless student's progress or location once the evaluation of the child has been completed, and he or she is placed in the appropriate classroom. Transiency also affects services such as special education evaluations, tutorial assistance

and counseling. These services are likely to have only limited effectiveness when the homeless child's involvement is of short duration.

The encouraging news is there are some new programs confronting the educational barriers homeless children face and attempting to give these students the necessary support to stay in school. Many of the programs working within the public school setting, such as the Denver, Colorado Public School Program, offer homeless students the opportunity to receive remedial assistance. Another advantage to some public school programs for elementary school students is the fact that these projects provide access to all children in the school. The Extended School Day Program in New York City and the Denver program both offer homeless children the opportunity to interact with their non-homeless peers. By maintaining an open enrollment policy, these programs help combat the stigmatization of homeless students.

Helping educators become more aware of the issue of homelessness and how it affects children is another way public schools can assist these children. The Massachusetts Department of Education has created a workshop series for educators to help sensitize them to the special needs of homeless students. A workshop session in October, 1989 also offered suggestions to help educators reach out to these pupils. (See a copy of the Massachusetts pamphlet for educators, *Strategies for School Personnel*, in Appendix B to this report, pages 33-36.)

The Wisconsin Transition Room tries another strategy to help make a homeless child's introduction to a new school a positive experience. The program provides educators with the opportunity to evaluate the child so that an appropriate educational placement can be made. The staff from the transition room also eases the homeless child's entrance into a classroom by introducing the student to his or her new teacher. These initial evaluative and preparatory activities may help classroom teachers work more effectively with the homeless child.

The Coeur d'Alene School in Venice, California also uses additional staff to help the homeless child succeed in the classroom. This school utilizes a teacher assistant, who works with the homeless child's regular teacher, and also has counseling staff who work to provide a supportive, encouraging environment for the child. In addition to academic support, the West Virginia Department of Education's rural project provides direct services to homeless children. These children are allowed to enter school early in the morning so that they have the opportunity to bathe before class begins. New clothes are also given to homeless children once a week from apparel donated by the local community.

Another way to help the homeless pupil is to involve the child's parents in his or her education. Many of the programs in this report have a parent involvement

component. The Students Living in Temporary Housing Program in New York designates a representative to inform parents of their rights regarding the homeless student's educational placement. In addition, this program offers counseling to both parents and children. The Home School Visitors Program in Apache Junction, Arizona also works with the entire homeless family. Staff from this program reach out to parents by helping them enroll their children in school, and also by aiding parents in contacting any needed social services providers.

Project GAIN in New York takes on the parental and supportive role for homeless adolescents, who often are estranged from their parents. Students are given assistance with housing, medical care, clothing and vocational counseling. These services are provided in addition to academic support and counseling.

Other projects try to meet the needs of students who attend public school, but who also need additional services. The Maryland Homework Assistance/Tutorial Program and Helping Hands projects make the effort to go out to the shelters in which these students reside and provide them with remedial and tutorial assistance.

Another approach is creating alternative educational placements for homeless children while they are in transition. These alternative programs often work with the public school to provide the special individualized attention that many who work with homeless children feel the public school cannot give. In addition, all of the separate school programs described in this report offered multi-services such as counseling and medical attention to the children and their families.

One benefit to alternative educational programs is their flexible admission policies. In these schools, homeless children may enroll regardless of whether their prior academic records are available. The only criteria for enrollment at First Place Program in Seattle, Washington or the Harbor Summit School in San Diego, California is residence in a participating shelter. In addition, these programs often help compile medical and academic records for homeless students to ease their transfer from "shelter schools" to a regular public school.

Most importantly, separate program staff asserted in interviews that their familiarity with the issues of homelessness and related problems is critical to providing quality services. The staff's sensitivity to these children helped them to feel comfortable in separate schools. The smaller size of the classroom at these locations and the comfort of being surrounded by children in similar situations gives students the security they need to concentrate on learning, staff claimed. These educators also stated that the compassion and individualized attention they provide gives homeless students better emotional preparation to make the transition into permanent housing.

Alternative educational settings are subject to criticism, however. The creation of schools specifically for homeless students further isolates these children from their permanently housed peers. Additionally, these settings allow the public schools to ignore or minimize their responsibility to educate homeless children. It may seem easier for the public school to send all homeless children to a "special" school rather than providing the necessary supportive services to enable these students to successfully integrate into the mainstream classroom. Homeless children may also suffer if they experience disabilities that special education services could address and that the alternative school might not be prepared to handle.

A better solution would be for the public schools to implement a program that incorporates many of the positive qualities the separate school projects in this report have. Given the resources of most school districts, providing needed supportive services should be possible if educators are willing to take the initiative. It should be noted that these programs must be comprehensive. The Youth Education and Learning Project in Providence, Rhode Island is an excellent example of the advantages of offering multi-services to homeless students. Arizona's Home School Visitors Program takes this approach a step further by providing services for the entire homeless family. These efforts to help the "whole" child and family increase the chance that the student will be able to concentrate on learning. Without this inclusive approach, program effectiveness will be limited.

A true "model" program should help a school district revise its enrollment process to ensure that homeless children are give equal access to all services offered, thus fulfilling a major objective of the federal McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. In addition, schools should designate a representative to take responsibility for informing homeless families of their rights and choices regarding the educational placement of their children. Likewise, the school needs to establish better communication with the community and social service agencies, so that school personnel are equipped to direct homeless families to other sources of assistance.

Simple things such as educating the staff to be sensitive to the needs of homeless students can make a big difference in how a child feels when he or she enters a new school. The extra effort, such as offering new clothes collected by donations, allows the child to feel comfortable with his or her peers and with educators. Furthermore, supportive services, including counseling for the children with emphasis on improving self-esteem and coping with the emotional strain of being homeless, as well as remedial assistance and careful assessment for possible disabilities, facilitate a more positive educational environment for the homeless child.

Another method being tried by the public schools to address this issue is the use of funds for remedial services under the federal Chapter 1 program to provide assistance to homeless students. Massachusetts, for example, is negotiating with some school districts and homeless adolescent shelters to provide needed educational services, funded with Chapter 1 monies, to these youth. Arizona is also supplementing public school services for homeless children with its Chapter 1 funds. These schemes enable districts to offer a variety of services to homeless students who are experiencing academic difficulties.

School districts need to become more involved in finding creative ways to help homeless students succeed in school. Programs should be comprehensive, addressing the variety of problems these children experience. Practical positive steps, such as making an extra effort to help a homeless child feel welcome at the school, must be regularly implemented. Homeless children cannot afford to wait until they are settled into permanent housing before they concentrate on learning. Schools must work with homeless families, social service and other governmental agencies and the community to enable these children to overcome barriers and take advantage of their educational rights.

Kathleen P. McCall, a June, 1990 Master's Degree candidate at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education, was a research assistant at the Center for Law and Education from September, 1989 to February, 1990.

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APPENDIX "A"

TOTAL RESPONSES

Letters Sent: 77
Mail Responses: 29
Phone Responses: 17

LIST OF RESPONSES

State Coordinators of Education of Homeless Children and Youth

State	Mail Response	Phone Response
Alabama	Yes	No
Alaska	No	No
Arizona	Yes	Yes
Arkansas	No	No
California	Yes	Yes
Colorado	Yes	Yes
Connecticut	Yes	Yes
Delaware	No	No
District of Columbia	No	No
Florida	Yes	No
Georgia	No	No
Hawaii	No	No
Idaho	No	No
Illinois	No	No
Indiana	No	No
Iowa	No	No
Kansas	Yes	No
Kentucky	No	No
Louisiana	No	No
Maine	Yes	No
Maryland	Yes	Yes
Massachusetts	Yes	Yes
Michigan	No	No
Minnesota	No	No
Mississippi	No	No
Missouri	Yes	No
Montana	No	No

State	Mail Response	Phone Response
Nebraska	Yes	No
Nevada	Yes	No
New Hampshire	Yes	Yes
New Jersey	No	No
New Mexico	No	Yes
New York	Yes	Yes
North Carolina	Yes	No
North Dakota	No	No
Ohio	No	No
Oklahoma	No	No
Oregon	Yes	No
Pennsylvania	No	No
Puerto Rico	No	No
Rhode Island	Yes	Yes
South Carolina	No	No
South Dakota	No	No
Tennessee	No	No
Texas	No	Yes
Utah	No	No
Vermont	No	No
Virginia	Yes	No
Washington	Yes	Yes
West Virginia	Yes	Yes
Wisconsin	Yes	Yes
Wyoming	Yes	No
Virgin Islands	Yes	No

Regional Coordinators on the Homeless

Regions	Mail Response	Phone Response
Region I	Yes	No
Region II	Yes	Yes
Region III	No	No
Region IV	No	No
Region V	No	No

Regions	Mail Response	Phone Response
Region VI	No	No
Region VII	Yes	No
Region VIII	No	No
Region IX	No	No
Region X	No	No

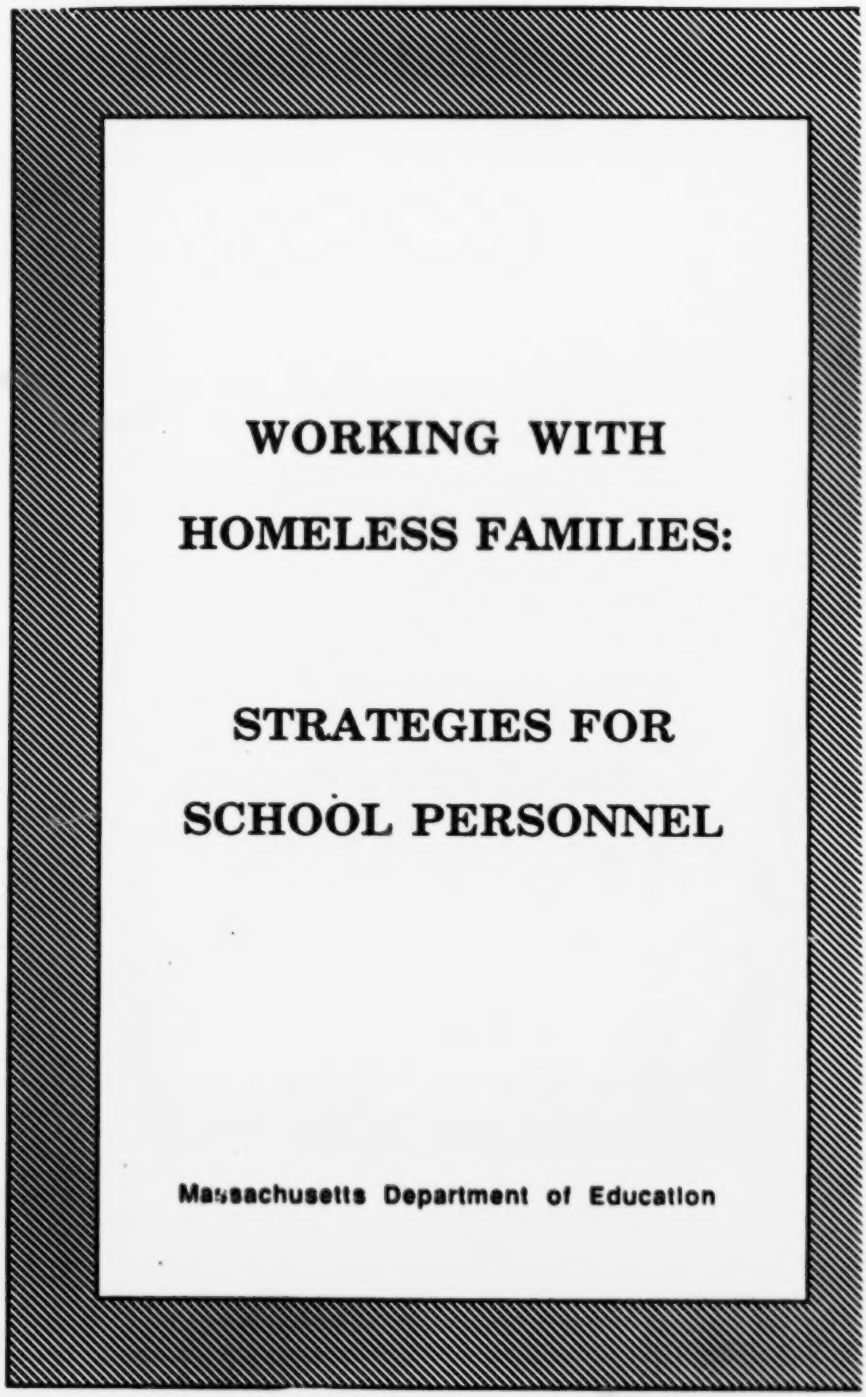
National Organizations

Organization	Mail Response	Phone Response
National Coalition for the Homeless Washington, D.C.	No	No
National Governors' Association Washington, D.C.	No	No
Children's Defense Fund Washington, D.C.	No	Yes
ASPIRA Association National Office Washington, D.C.	No	No
Institute for Responsive Education Boston, MA	Yes	No
National Black Child Development, Inc. Washington, D.C.	No	No
National Urban League New York, NY	No	No
National Network of Runaway & Youth Services Washington, D.C.	No	Yes

Local Organizations

Organization	Mail Response	Phone Response
Advocates for Children of New York, Inc. Long Island City, NY	Yes	Yes
Public Education Association New York, NY	No	No
Statewide Youth Advocacy Rochester, NY	No	No
Education Law Center Newark, NJ	No	No
Project Schools Newark, NJ	No	No
Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless Boston, MA	No	Yes

APPENDIX B: MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION "STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL"



This pamphlet contains some ideas for school personnel who are working with homeless children and their families; included are ways that teachers, school administrators, and counselors can help meet the needs of homeless children in their school system. The following suggestions were gathered from school personnel in other states, from recent literature on homeless families, and from personal contact with service providers who are currently involved with homeless families. We encourage you to use or adapt any of these to fit your situation and hope these suggestions will help you respond to the unique needs of homeless children.

* *

1.) Find out if there are any shelters or hotels/motels housing homeless families in your area. If so, contact shelter personnel (directors, family life advocates) and establish a shelter-school communication system. Discuss the policies and programs of your school with shelter staff and ask them to explain their program to you. Ask shelters to inform you when a child moves into their facility and to let you know when children are planning to move out of the shelter.

2.) Have a "personnel exchange" day with local shelters or service providers who are working with families living in hotels/motels. Have personnel from your school "shadow" a member of the shelter staff for a day to gain an insight into their role and responsibilities. Vice versa - have a member of the shelter staff shadow a member of the school's staff for a day. This exchange will help both parties understand how the other operates and can lead to shelter/school collaboration.

3.) Send a copy of all newsletters, notes, school calendars, etc. to the shelters to keep them informed of school activities. Advertise in the hotels/motels and shelters - put up posters which describe special programs the district or school has to offer (e.g., adult education, vocational education, youth programs, etc.).

4.) Try to work out an agreement with the shelter where teachers can make home visits to the parents there. At the initial meeting discuss how the parents can be involved with their child's education and the role the school plays in that child's life.

5.) Set up home-reading programs in the shelter. Donate books and, if possible, a specified number of volunteer hours to be spent organizing and running the reading program.

6.) Volunteer to be an after-school tutor for children in shelters and hotels/motels. Work with the shelter to organize the program. Ask local libraries to donate space for the tutoring sessions.

7.) Have one homeless liaison/contact person in each school and district for shelter personnel, social workers, and homeless families to call as questions/problems arise. Give the name and telephone number of this person to local service agencies and shelters.

8.) Have school volunteers go into hotels/motels and shelters to talk first-hand with families; they can help parents enroll their children in school, explain school policies, describe upcoming activities, and give parents ideas on how they can become involved in school activities.

9.) Sponsor a "materials/clothing drive" to collect school supplies (crayons, pencils, paper, glue, etc.) and clothing to have on hand at the beginning of the school year. Homeless parents may not be able to afford these materials so having them available will prevent children from starting the school year without the needed supplies - and will avoid any embarrassment they may feel in not having these materials.

10.) Do the children in your classroom celebrate their birthdays by bringing in treats (cupcakes, cookies, etc.)? If so, keep in mind that homeless children probably will not have the resources to bring in such goodies. Perhaps other arrangements could be made to provide treats on their birthdays.

11.) Keep in mind that children living in hotels/motels and shelters may not have access to a television set - or there may be ten other people sharing the set. Therefore, homework assignments that involve watching TV may not be completed.

12.) Have a buddy system. When a homeless child moves into the school have another child be his/her buddy to show him/her around the school, introduce him/her to people, etc.

13.) Children in shelters and hotels/motels may not have any physical space in which to do their homework. By providing them with their own "transportable desk" (decorated flat box, clipboard, notebook) you will give them a special place to do their homework.

14.) Ensure that homeless children have an opportunity to participate in school-wide and after-school activities. Will the homeless children be excluded from such activities because they lack transportation, appropriate dress (costumes), etc.?

15.) Develop a set of quickly administered screening instruments that an aide or volunteer can administer that might give teachers immediate information about the abilities of the student being placed.

16.) Incorporate classroom survival skills (i.e., listening, following instructions, asking for help, etc.), social skills and self-esteem components into your curriculum. Such skills can help bolster a child's self esteem and give him/her a sense of belonging.

17.) Homeless children have little or no structure in their everyday lives. Provide them with this structure in the classroom by keeping a consistent daily schedule with clear, concise rules. If you plan to have a substitute or make any changes in the classroom routine let them know ahead of times. Include transition procedures.

18.) Provide "closure" for homeless children if you know they are planning to leave your school. Provide them with a special time to clean out their cubbies or lockers and say good-bye to their friends and teachers. Give them a copy of their transfer card and IEP (if they have one) when they leave.

19.) Make sure the school breakfast and lunch programs are available without barriers and stigma to homeless children.

20.) Put "Homeless Children and Their Families" as a topic for one of your district's upcoming inservices. Contact Michelle Fryt Linehan, Coordinator of the Office for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, Mass. Dept of Education (617-770-7493), if you are interested in having the Dept of Education present such an inservice program.

Do you know of other programs

or local efforts to address the

special needs of homeless students?

Please let us know about them by sending this form to:

Shelley Jackson
Center for Law and Education
955 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Thank you for your help!

- - - -